A Dissertation

Passed March 3. 1829

On the

Yellow Fever

By Thomas Prettyman
Pennsylvania.

For a Degree of Doctor of Medicine

"Whoever thinks a faultless piece to see,
"Thinks what never was, nor is, nor ever shall be:
"In every work regard the writer's end,
"Nor none can compass more than they intend.

Pope.

1829

Fatal Disease. — In the commencement of this disease the pain is dull and remitting, seated about the pit of the stomach, it progressively grows worse becoming at length violent and continued, extending downwards to the back, loins, rectum and bladder, also to the extremities; The patient now becomes very restless, says he feels as though some person was stabbing him in different places, also by the violence of the pain there is soreness of the external muscles, insomuch that the patient complains of the weight of the bed-clothes, and often even the slightest touch of the finger, these symptoms succeeded sometimes by paralysis of the extremities, and first of the upper extremities, commencing at the pit of the stomach and extending along the sec-

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-teralis and deltoid muscles to the arm, and even to the end of the fingers: the pain sometimes alternates from the stomach to the superficial muscles, but from the commencement unto the end of the disease the stomach is not entirely free from pain, and as pain in the stomach increases, in like manner comes on sickness and costiveness, even so soon as the second or third day the retchings become violent, and the discharge appears to be acrid slime and porraceous bile. these discharges sometimes procure slight relief, but it is only momentary, for the pain soon returns and the matter is again secreted and thrown into the stomach, and thus we have a return of the retchings, and often with redoubled violence; Costiveness appears invincible, the intestines themselves exhibit symptoms of violent spasm, insomuch

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that a glyster can hardly be injected, from the powerful contraction of the sphincter ani, also in the advanced stages of this disease, it is no uncommon occurrence for dysuria to take place in a very high degree; The pulse is very generally for the first two or three days perfectly natural, and mostly when a change takes place it is somewhat increased and contracted, but seldom exceeding one hundred in a minute. When the disease is about declining, we have as a symptom of it pain around the edges of the feet, and extremities of the toes, and in appearence resembling gouty feet, perspirations break out very much to the relief of the patient, also a disposition to go to stool, the discharges are at first copious, consisting of various kinds of excrements and hard lumps, mixed with

slime; also sometimes blood is voided and the patient is left much at ease; — There has been occasional instances of the disease intermitting; thus there may be an intermission of several days and then a return of the disease, and may thus continue for several weeks or even months, but with remissions of greater or less length of time. The disease can generally be overcome in five or six days, if the treatment is commenced sufficiently early, and we proceed correctly, if on the other hand it is neglected or badly treated, it may continue for weeks, producing deafness, blindness, delirium or epileptic fits and death, even when it does not prove fatal, it is too apt to terminate in palsy, and leave behind it contractions of the hands and feet, with an inability in their muscles to perform their office, and in this miserable state of existence the patient may

affords relief after two or three powders have been taken, it may also be given per os. Lead in the form of Sugar of Lead is not supposed to produce the disease very readily. I believe Dr. Chapman related an instance in which two drachms of this Salt had been taken without producing the disease, but on the contrary purged violently. — Symptoms of Enteritis are to be met with and here leaches, Fomentations, Sinapisms and Blisters over the abdomen are to be applied. As soon as the system becomes fully under the influence of Mercury, the bowels yield very readily to the operation of Cathartics; To relieve pain and spasm so frequently an attendant after constipation has been removed, we may resort to Alum or Moseleys Vitriolic Solution, also Nitrate of Silver; if the bowels should be left in a state of torpor, Stimulating Cathartics are to be given and

For this purpose there is nothing better than Oleum Ricini and Spt: Terebinth, in the proportion of half an ounce of the former to a drachm of the latter; — if dangerous hypercatharsis follow the exhibition of purgatives, opiates are to be given. When the disease attacks the head, we must resort to cupping, a blister to the back of the neck, sinapisms to the feet, and Calomel and Opium given in such a manner as to effect ptyalism as speedily as possible. Lastly, When it terminates in paralysis of the extremities — Which is I believe seldom the case under the Mercurial Practice — the treatment is, opening caustic issues on each side of the nape of the neck, stimulating frictions, and purging medicines long persisted in; as advised by Dr. Physick. In addition to this we may use the Strychnos.